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John G Taylor

INDONESIA'S FORGOTTEN WAR

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF EAST TIMOR

'John Taylor's thoroughly researched book is an impressive analysis of East Timor's ordeal under Indonesian occupation since 1976. Drawing on a wide range of sources he explains cogently why the United States, Australia and the Western democracies have abetted the Indonesian regime's aggression. In harrowing detail, he describes the campaign of war, torture, disappearances, forced resettlement and planned famine which over fifteen years have cost at least 200,000 East Timorese lives. Particularly enlightening is his account of the reasons for the astonishing stamina of the East Timorese resistance, and his balanced judgment of the various East Timorese leaderships' successes and failures.'

- Ben Anderson, Director, Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University

'A path-breaking work that manages, as no previous study of East Timor has done, to perceive events through the eyes of those who actually lived through the brutalities of the Indonesian invasion and military occupation ... Fills an important gap on Third World regional conflicts.'

- Peter Carey, Trinity College, Oxford

Some wars make headlines; others do not. This book is about a war on a remote island - north of Australia and 2,000 miles east of Djakarta - that has never completely stopped since Indonesia first invaded East Timor in 1975. The reasons for silence, as this book makes clear, lie not just in remoteness, but in the economic and geopolitical interests of the leading powers in the region. Indonesia has the world's fifth largest population, huge oil and other natural resources, and a crucial strategic location. Little wonder that the USA, Japan and Australia have sought to downplay this forgotten war.

But the issue will not go away. News of atrocities continues to reach the outside world. Portugal, the island's former colonial ruler, has never recognized Indonesia's invasion. The people of East Timor - utterly different in language, religion and culture from largely Muslim Indonesia - have never ceased to resist. The illegality and brutality of the Indonesian attempts to pacify the island raises issues of human rights and the East Timorese demand for self-determination to which the international community can no longer turn a blind eye.

Dr John G Taylor is Principal Lecturer in Social Studies at the South Bank Polytechnic, London, where he is also Director of the Centre for Chinese Studies. He edits *Timor Link* for the Catholic Institute of International Relations.

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